

FACT SHEET

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

ACCELERATED TRANSITIONS PILOT PROGRAM

Summary of Proposal

Colorado's Department of Corrections (DOC) is proposing to transition offenders who have served at least half of their parole term from parole into the community, using the following criteria as established by DOC Administrative Regulation 250-29:

- In compliance with all parole conditions, including treatment, payment of restitution, and sustained sobriety;
- Complaint-free for the past six months;
- Not currently convicted of a sex offense.

The savings generated by accelerated re-entry would be reinvested into front-loaded services and concentrated electronic monitoring for offenders releasing onto parole supervision. It is assumed that the increased services would be directed toward new parolees based on need level and may result in offenders releasing onto parole supervision approximately six months prior to the mandatory release date (MRD). Service expansions may include increasing the frequency of mental health visits, increasing the frequency of employment counseling appointments, and increasing the duration of housing assistance. This proposal is expected to transition approximately 2,600 offenders from parole to the community, and approximately 3,100 offenders from prison on to parole supervision in Colorado.

This proposal will save a net amount of approximately \$18.9 million General Fund in FY 2009-10.

Rationale

In December 2008, the Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ) released its annual report containing multiple recommendations for modernizing, streamlining, and improving Colorado's criminal justice system. Recommendation L-12 of the CCJJ report requested that DOC develop a standardized policy regarding early terminations of parole, and recommended that such a policy take effect when half of the parole term has been served and other risk reduction benchmarks have been met. Additionally, research shows that offenders who recidivate do so quickly, typically in the first weeks and months following release from prison, and that re-entry services should be focused on the time of and soon after release. Finally, this proposal supplements other current and previous efforts to apply research based models toward improving public safety, such as the Governor's three anti-recidivism packages and the newly-acquired Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) funding with which the Department of Public Safety plans to operate an evidence-based practices training for criminal justice practitioners.

Other State Actions

More than half of all states and the District of Columbia are trying to reduce the growth in their prison populations through alternative sentencing and through new probation and parole procedures. For example, Illinois is considering significant reductions in prison jobs, sentence reductions and early parole terminations; California is looking at strategies to reclassify felonies, reserving parole supervision for high-level offenders and allowing low-level offenders to serve portions of sentences in community corrections or on house arrest; Michigan has reduced its prison population by about 6.9 percent using increased sentence commutations and reduced technical violations.